



SAS celebrates 80 years with anniversary flights to New York, where the journey began

Eighty years after SAS' very first flight departed Stockholm for New York, special anniversary flights from Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo mark the airline's 80th anniversary and celebrate eight decades of connecting Scandinavia with the world and the world with Scandinavia.

"Celebrating 80 years of SAS is about honoring where we come from, while keeping our focus firmly on the future. SAS was founded on a distinctly Scandinavian idea: that by working together across borders, we could achieve more and bring our region closer to the world. Eighty years later, that idea remains at the heart of who we are. We believe the world needs more Scandinavia, and our role is to keep connecting our people, ideas and businesses with the rest of the world," says Anko van der Werff, President and CEO of SAS.

The historic flight traces back to September 17, 1946, when the DC-4 aircraft Dan Viking completed SAS' inaugural journey from Stockholm's Bromma Airport to LaGuardia Airport in New York. Carrying 28 passengers, the flight took 25 hours with scheduled stops in Copenhagen, Prestwick and Gander before arriving in New York to a warm public reception.

Today, eight decades later, flights departing from all three Scandinavian capitals follow that same transatlantic path to New York, transforming a 25-hour multi-stop journey into a seamless, direct flight lasting just under eight hours.

Eight decades of Scandinavian innovation and global reach

The launch of SAS and the landmark New York route in 1946 established a legacy of Scandinavian innovation in international aviation. In the 1950s, SAS opened new possibilities for long-distance travel with the polar route, shortening travel times between continents and reinforcing the airline's role as a pioneer in global connectivity. The Jet Age of the 1960s brought greater speed and comfort, while SAS also became known internationally for Scandinavian design, service and hospitality.

Throughout the following decades, SAS continued to shape international air travel, from iconic collaborations and the introduction of the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet to a new approach to business travel built around efficiency, comfort and reliability. In the 1990s, SAS helped drive industry collaboration as a co-founder of Star Alliance and launched EuroBonus, creating one of the aviation industry's most recognized loyalty programs.



Reaching 80 years is first and foremost a tribute to generations of dedicated colleagues across SAS. For eight decades, the passion, expertise and Scandinavian spirit of colleagues on the ground and in the air have helped shape the airline, carry its legacy forward and build the foundation for the next chapter of SAS.

Investing in the next chapter

While the anniversary celebrates eight decades of history, SAS is equally focused on the future. Over the past year, the airline has announced major fleet investments, including up to 40 Airbus widebody aircraft and 55 Embraer E195-E2 regional aircraft. Together with the ongoing renewal of the Airbus A320neo fleet, these investments represent the most significant modernization of the SAS fleet in decades and will strengthen SAS' role as Scandinavia's gateway to the world.

Celebrating in New York, then and now

To commemorate the anniversary, SAS is hosting an exclusive anniversary reception on a rooftop in the heart of New York City on September 18, 2026. Held in partnership with the Scandinavian diplomatic representations in New York City and Washington D.C., the gathering brings together guests from government, diplomacy, business, culture and aviation to honor the journey that began in 1946 and to look ahead to the next chapter of transatlantic connectivity.

The celebration reflects the same ambition that has guided SAS for 80 years: connecting Scandinavia with the world and the world with Scandinavia.